TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

Purposes of This Paper

The purposes of these papers are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church; finance, religious education, community relationships; and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

Contributors

CARL C. TAYLOR, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

CALVIN SCHNUCKER, Dubuque University, Dubuque, Iowa.

C. M. MCCONNELL, Boston University, Boston, Mass.

HOWARD H. KEIM, JR., Brethren Church, Grundy Center, Iowa.

This Issue
No. 31
Published Jan., 1947

New Facts about Rural Life

CARL C. TAYLOR

• The new facts about rural life which I am going to discuss are those things which are transpiring in American agriculture and rural life as long-time trends but which are so hidden in their meaning that they are not even recognized as facts by most people. I am going to discuss these things because I believe it is one of the contributions of religious leaders to take the long-time view, to see clearly what is happening to life and human events, to reveal their significance and attempt to influence their direction.

The four long-time consistent trends in American rural life which are most obvious to the student are: 1) that a steadily diminishing percentage of American people live on farms. 2) that there is a steady long-time trend of increasing intermingling of agriculture and other occupations. 3) that there is a decline in the operation of the agricultural ladder as a method of gaining farm ownership and as a means of insuring economic and social security and 4) that there is a constant shift from dependence on local, simple face-to-face (neighborhood) types of association, to non-local, complex, relatively impersonal types of organizations and contacts.

I. The Steadily Diminishing Percentage of American People Who Live on Farms.

A. In 1820, 93% of all American citizens lived outside of towns and cities of 2500 population. In 1940 only 43% lived outside of these towns and cities.

B. In 1850, 72% of all gainfully employed were in agricultural pursuits; in 1940, only 18%.

C. In 1920, when for the first time, the Census records separated rural farm from rural non-farm population, it was discovered that only 30% of rural people lived on farms. By 1940 this had fallen to 23%.

II. The Long-Time Trend of Increasing Intermingling of Agriculture and Other Occupations.

A. A steadily increasing number of persons make their living partly by employment in agriculture and partly by employment in non-agricultural occupations.

B. In 1929 there were 723,269 farmers who did 100 or more days of work off the farm. In 1939 there were 943,581.

C. Counting all persons not merely farm operators there were in 1930 1,318,000 people who did some off-the-farm work and in 1946 there were 3,050,000.

III. The decline in the operation of the agricultural ladder as a method of gaining farm ownership and as a means of insuring economic and social security.

A. Only a relatively small percentage of those who start as farm laborers ultimately gain in the ownership of farms.

1. In 1915 Professor Lloyd said that it took six years longer to gain farm ownership than it did in 1890.
2. All studies of the agricultural ladder show only that a given percent of those who own farms were at one time farm laborers. They do not show what percent of those who started as laborers at any given time ultimately became farm owners.
3. A number of other studies show that there is a tendency for the sons of farm owners to become owners but not for the sons of tenants, much less of laborers, to become owners.

B. Because of the increase in tenancy and farm mortgage debt, farmers own a steadily diminishing percentage of the equities in the land which they farm.

1. Farm tenancy increased from 25% in 1880 to 42% in 1935.
2. In the best agricultural areas of the nation, well over 50%, in some cases 75%, of the equities are held by others than the persons who till the soil.

C. The majority of the members of each new generation of farmers must purchase anew the lands they farm or never own their farms.

1. Because so many farmers retire and thus take their capital out of

R. J. MacWan, India; Juan Diaz, Mexico; Carl C. Taylor, U.S.A.

farming, and because estates built up on farms are divided between members of the family, some of whom shifted out of farming, the ownership of farms is not carried over to any large extent from generation to generation.

D. An increasing percentage of cash income must go into expenditures for operating farms and for family living.

1. Mechanization lessens the amount and the irksomeness of farm labor but the purchase and operation of machines impose a heavy fixed cost which must be paid annually.
2. Higher levels of living tend to give farm families parity in social conditions with urban families but money spent for current levels of living cannot be spent in the acquisition of farms.

E. There is accumulating evidence that farm laborers are coming to be a proletarian group rather than prospective owners or even tenants.

1. Those who are migrant laborers become the most marginal element in our total economy.
2. Those who are non-migrants will probably sooner or later become a permanent proletarian class in our society.

IV. The constant shift from dependence on local, simple, face-to-face (neighborhood) types of association, to non-local, complex, relatively impersonal types of organizations and contacts.

A. There has been a steady shift from local units of organization and operation, such as schools, church, exchange of work, recreational and welfare activities, to large areas of services which are purchased or tax supported, with the consequence that,

1. Informal, neighborly cooperative arrangements have given away to contractual and institutional arrangements.
2. There has been a relative shift in attitudes away from mutual aid and neighborliness and a greater faith in mechanized and rationalized techniques.

B. There has been a shift of processes from farms to factories and urban centers, which has magnified dependence upon the market and diminished the dependence upon the home and local communities.

1. The processing of food products, slaughtering and packing, milling, and the production of dairy products have shifted from farms to factories.
2. In 1820, two-thirds of the manufacture of clothes was in homes. Now the manufacture of textiles, boots, shoes, etc., is almost universally in factories.
3. The same thing is true of the manufacturing of many minor products, even the baking of bread, the canning of fruits and vegetables, etc.

V. Each of these trends separately, and all of them combined, have presented farmers and their leaders with issues and problems, which cannot be solved by the traditional beliefs that the same security exists in agriculture that did 50 years ago. Some body of rural statesmen must clearly appraise the import of these changes and furnish the values by which adjustment to the changes can be made and the good ways of life preserved and constructed for future generations.

A. Probably neither church leaders nor anyone else can stem the movements of farm people off farms and into other occupations. They can do something to alleviate the harshness of the processes by which people choose to move or are forced out of agriculture.

1. If there are values which inhere in the rural modes of life, something should be done to preserve these values when rural people move elsewhere.
2. Because there are hundreds of thousands of those who remain on farms who do not have the means of adequate support on the land, something should be done to assist them to become self-sustaining, either by securing adequate farms or by securing off-farm income.

B. Rural leaders probably can and should encourage the intermingling of agricultural and other occupations, because

1. They would thereby assist many farm families to gain adequate family income.
2. They would lessen the isolation and differences of farm people and others.
3. They should, on the one hand, assist in the preservation of rural life values, and on the other hand, assist farm people to gain the values and services which town people now have.
4. The Subsistence Homestead program was and is good because it attempts to guide a long-time and seemingly inevitable trend.

C. Leaders can probably do something in the face of the failure of

the agricultural ladder to work.

1. They can do much to dispel the fallacies about the extent to which it has worked in the past and thus keep chauvinistic leaders from advertising it as a sure method of social security for farm people.
2. They can encourage partnerships between fathers and sons, discourage early farm retirements and even advocate the retention in agriculture of wealth which was developed out of agriculture.
3. They can make farmers aware that programs of social security are not socialistic, are not merely for urban working people, but are modern and efficient methods for underwriting the insecurities of farm people with at least a minimum degree of security.

D. The values of primary, face-to-face types of association need not all be lost as we continue to shift from a relatively simple to a relatively complex rural life.

1. The techniques and practices of organized cooperation make it possible for people to associate themselves together in big business enterprises and at the same time practice mutual aid by means of face-to-face associations.

2. The promotion of primary group values, neighborliness, cooperation, mutual aid, should be a continuous preachment and practice of farm leaders, instead of the tendency on the part of some to scout these ideas and ideals as out-moded and impractical.

3. If agriculture and farm life is the last fortress of mutual aid, and if faith in and practice of mutual aid as a fundamental law of life is in jeopardy, then it is high time that religious and other rural leaders understand that the long-time trends which I have pointed out be recognized in their full significance and that their help and guidance is needed in preserving and promoting these fundamental values more than it is needed in some of the easily recognized but less significant new things in American agriculture.

Some Iowa Rural Churches

"SOME Iowa Rural Churches" is the title of a study conducted in 1946 under the auspices of the Committee on Cooperative Field Research of New York, the Iowa Interchurch Council, and the Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship. The report of 70 pages was presented to the Survey Committee on Monday, November 11. The study was directed and its report made by H. Paul Douglass, Director of the Committee for Cooperative Field Research.

Eight denominations participated in the field work, and in gathering material for the report. The communities studied were selected by these denominations as presenting some special concern or problem in the conduct of their church work. Thirty-five communities checked by two or more denominations were chosen for direct study by field visitation. Two hundred and thirty-two other communities, identified by some one denomination as of special concern to it, were studied on the basis of published church statistics over a period of fifteen years.

The report compares the best of Iowa's churches and communities with the poorest and with the average. Dividing the churches into fifths, it was found that the top fifth of the churches averaged 487 members each and were proportionately strong in other aspects. Their membership represented more than half of the total membership of the 149 Protestant churches of the 35 communities. As compared with Iowa's rural best, it was interesting to note that the average membership of the churches of the 10 leading denominations of Dayton, Ohio, is only 275 members, while the average Protestant Church in Brooklyn, New York, has only 422 members. In other words, Iowa's rural best is ahead of the mine-run of churches for such representative churches, both middle sized and large. Relative to the size of the community, it is probably as influential and successful as any type of Protestant Church to be found anywhere in America. In this the state can take satisfaction.

The average membership of the best Iowa churches is ten times the average of the smallest. The smallest fifth of the 194 churches of the sample average 42 members per church. The entire group accounts for only 4.7% of the total membership of the churches in the thirty-five communities. The poorest fifth of the rural churches are better however than the best in the relative size of their Sunday Schools. Whereas the Sunday School enrollment in the best churches is less than one-half of their membership, the Sunday Schools of the poorest churches enroll more pupils than there are people on the membership roll.

Comparing the best and the poorest one is shocked, and feels like ask-

Calvin Schnucker and H. Paul Douglass

ing why a state whose better churches are so good should have to tolerate an equal number of so far below its own best rural achievement.

Averaging up the worst and the best, the overall conclusion from the sample is that rural Iowa is seriously over-churched, that over one-half of the individual congregations are standing still or declining; that the effectiveness of the average church is rather low, its active membership much fewer than its nominal ones; that its ministers are poorly paid, constantly moving, largely non-resident from the churches which they serve; its youth poorly organized and served; its property over-equipped from the standpoint of the Sunday services, but not generally well equipped for any other phase of church activity.

The Iowa Religious Census

CALVIN SCHNUCKER

I. As a whole Iowans are a church belonging, church attending people. Churches and pastors are to be given credit for this achievement during the past decades.

- 62% of all Iowans are church members
- 53% of all Iowans attend church
- 25% of all Iowans attend Sunday School
- 21% who are not church members have a preference
- 17% of all Iowans are neither church members nor have a preference

II. Pastors of Iowa churches must be interested in the economic welfare of the people. The poorer agricultural lands of Iowa produce a people who do not attend the churches as faithfully as those living in the better agricultural areas.

III. The most faithful church people live in the country. Over 90% of the church members living in the country attend church at least once a month, less than 50% of the church members living in the towns and cities of Iowa attend church once a month. Consequently Town and City Pastors need increasingly to take note of these rural people in whom the strongest traditions are to be found.

IV. There are several major areas of concern for the church leaders of Iowa.

A. When people move from one area to another the pastor of the local church must be concerned about what happens to their membership. One township showed membership in 42 churches although there were only two churches in the township and less than twelve others within average attendance distance. This indicates one of the major leaks in church membership.

B. Pastors and churches in Iowa are doing a poor job of youth conservation. Boys drop out of Sunday School at 14 years and girls at 19. Both stop attending church before they are 20. Less than 28% of the young people are participating in a youth program in the church. It is possible that this 28% also makes up the majority of the 32% who continue church attendance.

The church today faces the need of maintaining a vital attractive youth program that will meet the needs of youth.

C. The Protestant church needs to rethink its position in regard to the family. When the religious interests of the family are torn between two, three, or even more churches, there is less faithfulness to church obligations than where the family loyalties are not divided.

V. In conclusion: The Iowa church situation calls upon its leaders for complete faithfulness and consecration, for intelligent and cooperative planning, and for just plain hard work.

Those who are interested in obtaining the entire study and analysis when completed should order direct from Dr. Calvin Schnucker, University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa.

Break-Down of Registrations

1.	Methodists	258
2.	Presbyterians (U.S. and U.S.A.)	154
3.	Disciples of Christ	94
4.	Evangelical and Reformed	85
5.	Baptists	71
6.	Congregational-Christians	58
7.	Evangelical United Brethren	42
8.	United Presbyterians	32
9.	Episcopalians	23
10.	Church of the Brethren	17
11.	Lutherans (various synods)	17
12.	Friends	14
13.	Not designated and all others	31

Juan Diaz, Mexico; Mark A. Dawber, U.S.A.; Miss Pyfrom, Canada; H. C. Jones, U.S.A.

Town & Country Church

Published monthly (except June, July, August) by the Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council of N.A., the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the International Council of Religious Education.

15c a copy; One Dollar a Year

Publication Office: Tenth and Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa.

Editorial Office: 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Board of Editors

Rural Church Officers

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

EDWIN L. BECKER, United Christian Missionary Society, Disciples of Christ.

MARK A. DAWBER, Executive Secretary, Home Missions Council of North America.

V. A. EDWARDS, Director of Rural Work, National Baptist Convention.

ELLIOTT L. FISHER, Superintendent Town and Country, Board of Missions and Church Extension, the Methodist Church.

KARL S. HENRY, Board of American Missions, United Lutheran Church in America.

HENRY W. MCLAUGHLIN, Department of Country Church and Sunday School Extension, Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication, Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

HENRY S. RANDOLPH, Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.; Chairman of the Committee on Town and Country.

MARK RICH, Town and Country Work, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

CLIFFORD L. SAMUELSON, Division of Domestic Missions, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

CLAUDE J. SNYDER, Board of National Missions, Evangelical and Reformed Church.

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP, Town and Country Department, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

M. R. ZIGLER, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Managing Editor. (On leave, 1945-46)

DON F. PIELSTICK, Acting Secretary and Editor.

The Church and Long Range Trends in Rural Life

C. M. McCONNELL

• Students of rural life in the United States have discovered some significant long-range trends which have meaning to everyone. The future of rural life may be predicted with some accuracy from these and other trends. The church is part of rural life and is involved in every trend. Before we get too impersonal about this trend business let's recognize the fact that people are involved. Men and women and children are not merely "land owners," "tenants," "sharecroppers," "migrants," "voters," but human beings who live in homes, eat food, swear, pray, fight, cooperate, move from place to place and eventually die. The direction they move is a trend if they move long enough, say twenty-five, forty, fifty, one hundred years. For instance the trend toward death is fairly well fixed and the death rate is one apiece for us all.

One trend in rural life which the church must recognize is that away from economic security on the farm. The process by which farm laborers become farm owners no longer operates on a large scale. Many never get on the ladder at all and many get on and fall off into the irrigation ditch or the labor camp.

There are in this nation over six hundred thousand migrants, two hundred thousand of which are labor gypsies. Two million more of the six million farmers are hanging onto their farm tenure by virtue of a mortgage or lease. They are "America's Displaced Persons." They are a national disgrace and the blame rests on the nation, not on them.

The church has joined the procession of those who neglect the marginal people. Even the labor unions have scorned them and the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union is about the only one which operates in this field.

This underprivileged group is the church's mission field. If it neglects this sector of rural life it will furnish chaplains to the well-to-do farmers who maintain them as hired men to preach some fractional faith which suits their prejudices, traditions or family tree. And finally give them "the benefit of clergy."

In this field the church may do some very necessary and difficult things. It can take over some migrant camps with the intent to build subsistence homesteads and fight it out with land sharks and greedy land owners. One Indiana woman charged forty-five migratory workers one dollar a week each to live in her barn. They shared the pump water with the hogs. The church may have to help set up a total migratory community services for health, recreation, education and worship. One explanation for the church's neglect of the rural marginal field is in the economic fact that it is not a good institutional investment. Few churches, little support and few benevolent gifts can be gleaned.

The time has come for us to recognize the fact that much of rural America is missionary territory, to set up a vast mission fund and take over the task of serving the total man in his total environment. At present the Home Missions Council is the pilot organization in this field and it has already charted the tasks and can furnish the plans.

Another long range trend in rural America which the church has to face is that of the break-up of the local, primary, mutual aid rural group. God forgive us, the church has helped break up the local group by her divisive program of denominationalism. The new program of church work must aim to preserve the rural community as a unit of living life at its best.

Already the lines are being laid for this new type of church. It will be based not only on theology but sociology. There are hopeful signs that the church is awakening to this task of helping to build a primary local rural group, either neighborhood or community which will be cooperative and therefore more Christian than anything so far de-

veloped in the rural life of America and the world.

The one over-all trend of rural America and the world is toward death—and not a natural one but rather suicide. Unless every church and every farmer and every migrant quickly becomes aware of the over-all threat of world destruction through war and combative nationalism it will not make much difference in the long run whether we die as tenants, landlords, migrants, Catholics or Protestants. If man is already obsolete he had better catch up with his world and save himself from being "vaporized" or liquidated by his own technical contraptions of death which he had better use on bugs and pests instead of his fellow human beings. In all this the church has a major part. This lies in the spiritual field which is the church's own.

Mass Meeting at KRNT Theatre

Wednesday Night Mass Meeting

• The manager of the KRNT Theatre estimated the attendance at between 3200-3500. It was the first experiment of this kind for the Convocation. Mark Rich of the Northern Baptists presiding introduced the Drake Chorus which entertained with twenty minutes of delightful music. The crowd responded well in an offering taken to finance this special session.

Mr. Rich stated that several had inquired as to the relation of Bishop Oxnam's topic, "Must We Fight a Third World War?" to a meeting on the rural church. He pointed out these relationships: 1. War has always meant depletion of the soil. Patriotism leads farmers to overtax the fertility of the soil and this is augmented by greed for high wartime prices. No adequate church can exist when the soil is depleted. 2. Industrial demands of war call people off the land, thus encouraging mechanization, large-scale operations which endanger the family farm and depopulate the rural church. 3. Farmers (being short of labor and urged to meet huge production goals) have little time for face-to-face relations, thus Christian fellowship and community welfare are endangered. These three things can completely destroy any vestige of a satisfactory rural culture.

A few excerpts from Bishop Oxnam's speech follow:

When we ask "Must we fight a Third World War?" we are actually asking "Is war between the United States of America and Russia inevitable?" Secretary Byrnes wisely stated upon his return from Paris, "If the temple of peace is to be built the idea of the inevitability of conflict must not be allowed to dominate the minds of men and tear asunder a world which God has made one. It is that idea of the inevitability of conflict that is throttling the economic recovery of Europe. It is that idea that is causing artificial tensions between states and within states. . . . War is inevitable only if states fail to tolerate and respect the rights of other states to ways of life they cannot and do not share. That is the truth we must all recognize."

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has just released a most important Statement on Soviet-American Relations. It begins with the declaration "War with Russia can be avoided and it must be avoided without compromise of basic convictions. Tensions exist which constitute a serious threat to world peace. That fact must be faced realistically and at the same time with courage and vision. It demands a new day of international accommodation which will reckon with fundamental differences in outlook and practice. If the nations find that way in our time, they may set the pattern of a peaceful future. Men should be impelled by a sense of urgency even greater than that which made them determined, resourceful, and cooperative to win the war."

Personally, I believe that totalitarianism constitutes a threat not only to democracy but to religion. However, I am persuaded that energy expended in fighting communism, if devoted to preserving and extending democracy, would make totalitarianism undesirable and democracy impregnable.

American democracy cannot endure unless the institutions within the democratic community are themselves democratic. There is a fundamental contradiction between a political life organized on democratic principle and an economic life organized on undemocratic principle. The right of the individual to participate in determining the political policy of the community in which he lives is accepted. The right to participate in determining policy in the shop in which he works or in the church in which he worships has not been fully accepted.

There is widespread feeling that if different beliefs and institutions come internationally into competitive contact, armed conflict is inevitable. That is why some identify world peace with world conformity. Others seek peace in terms of zones of influence which would insulate one faith from another. When neither attitude is practical, as is the case today, they become obsessed with

fear. Many followers of Marx preach that armed conflict between communism and "capitalist democracy" is inevitable. A like opinion is held by many in the Western democracies.

Such attitudes account for much of the danger in the present situation. Fear and suspicion lead to acts which, intended to be defensive, seem to others offensive. That, in turn, creates more fear and suspicion. Under these conditions, differences which are unavoidable are aggravated and the area of difference is increased by differences and misunderstandings which are unnecessary. Tension mounts until war can become inevitable merely because many people have erroneously thought it inevitable.

These Conclusions

• Closing the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, Dr. Hermann N. Morse, President of the Home Missions Council of North America, reviewed the development of the rural life movement, drawing the following conclusions:

1. If the Church would survive in the country, it must help its people to survive in the country.

2. The only sure defense against a bad influence or a bad trend is to release a good influence or start a good trend.

3. People will, in the long run, heartily support only what they think has real value, but when our ideals run into the ground progress ceases.

4. Selfishness is a form of social suicide; the finer values of any civilization are made possible only by the stewardship that dedicates to them the plus-values of our natural substance.

5. There is a distinctive culture of rural life well worth preserving which, if the country surrenders wholly to urban institutions and standards, will be smothered.

6. People need to learn how to make a living but when they have done so they still need to learn how to live.

7. The limiting factor in progress is almost never resources or knowledge but is in the realm of the spirit. Not poverty or ignorance but stubbornness and spiritual timidity are our greatest stumbling blocks.

Green Pastures and Still Waters

HOWARD H. KEIM, JR.

• The land where the shepherd boy sang "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters," has suffered erosion. The green pastures are now burned hills most of the years. The still water known by the shepherds are rushing, muddy torrents for a brief period, then dry wastes the rest of the time. Not enough of David's contemporaries understood man's responsibility to the Lord our Shepherd.

If we are to continue in this good land to have green pastures and still waters certain things are necessary.

1. We must recognize that the earth is holy. The yellow sub soil is showing through the black dirt on too many Iowa hills. Our problem is not lack of knowledge but lack of stewardship of the soil. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." God has loaned the use of the earth to us. It is a holy trust. The rural church must work with the county agent and the state agricultural college to maintain and improve the fertility of the soil for future generations.

2. The rural church must work for the economic independence of rural people. The farms in Grundy county are about 60% owner operated. In 1936 farms in our county were selling at $85.00 an acre. Today they bring over $350.00 per acre. Every rural church can have a parish credit union if it thinks so. The church people can pool their financial strength for their mutual benefit. Worthy young people can thus be assisted to economic security. Children can be taught to save.

3. The rural church should do long-time planning. The pastor and his church officials should sit together and ask themselves, "What should this church do for the promotion of God in our community during the next ten or twenty-five years?" They should examine such areas as service, education, leadership training, evangelism, decentralized industry and medical care.

4. The rural church also has a responsibility to maintain the still water of rural living by conserving the rural "water shed," of which worship, fellowship, family life and wholesome recreation are essential parts.

Mrs. Ralph Williamson, Hermann Morse, Ellis Marshburn

The Rural Church and Public Relations

• As chairman of the panel summarizing the reports of the commissions Dr. O. Ulrey said, "The rural church has been making rapid strides in America—in the direction of doing a better job in building the moral and spiritual foundations for rural life, and consequently for the entire society. Over 10,000 of the more than 70,000 rural clergymen attended rural institutes and schools conducted by denominational bodies, denominational colleges, seminaries, colleges of agriculture, and councils of churches during 1946. Approximately 40, or about one-fourth of the seminaries, have added rural departments or employed teachers on the rural church and community. The town and country church committees of denominations have expanded their activities. Several rural workers have been added to carry on programs at the national level and in the states. The rural fellowship groups of denominations and state councils of churches have strengthened their programs. The colleges of agriculture, the federal agricultural agencies, the farm organizations, and rural cooperatives are becoming increasingly concerned about the assistance they may offer to rural churches. These developments represent the optimistic side.

The continuous application of science and vocational education—the industrial or technological revolution—have brought a multitude of problems and issues before us. Character of people becomes increasingly important as a society becomes more industrialized, more urbanized, more interdependent. The need for order and discipline—in the economic and political areas—is becoming more apparent. The happenings of the past two decades indicate the alternatives: (1) either centralized control and regulation by public agencies or by private institutions, or (2) decentralized direction and regulation by the community institutions and especially through individuals with character who have an understanding of the forces and events.

The church, and especially the rural church, since it is located where the large proportion of the population for tomorrow is being reared, has a primary responsibility of assuming a commanding leadership among the character-building forces of the community. In spite of the steady growth in influence of Christianity in the Western World, some of the technological influences may be making the work of the church and its allies more difficult—and more necessary. Another recent lesson is that science may free or may enslave the individual. We admit that we have been making more progress in science and technology than in human relations, in character building, in the unfolding of the potentialities of human personality.

The rural church, consequently, needs to mobilize all of its forces—to utilize all its friends and allies in order to adequately fulfill its mission. My experiences during the past year in meeting with several hundred leaders of Rural America has convinced me that there are many unused friends—many unused resources—among the agricultural agencies, the agricultural colleges, the farm organizations and cooperatives, the farm journals, and the thousands of people on the land.

Farm people in the past have not adequately supported their churches—in finance or by participation. They have not clearly understood the overall potentialities of the church, although they have been religious people. In recent months, they have indicated in many ways that they believe in developing the spiritual life and that they believe in the creative community church. They also have sufficient finance to adequately support the rural church and the religious life of the community. Studies made in early 1946 by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System show that farmers of the United States had a business valued at 102 billion dollars, in which they had an equity of 92 percent. They had liquid assets of 14 billion dollars in bank deposits and currency, and over 5 billion dollars in U. S. savings bonds. Unfortunately, about 70 percent of these liquid assets were concentrated in the hands of 10 percent of the farm operators.

The rural churches have many needs—improving buildings, training ministers, more national and state rural workers, etc. One of the most important jobs is to present the rural church situation and opportunities to the multitude of unused friends and allies. This is a challenging public relations responsibility of the rural church leaders.

"The Church's Stake in Rural Life"

L. G. LIGUTTI

• "Let us build up a solid foundation of reasonable good will," he declared, "and let us not compete with one another in doing good to the rural people."

"Let the Church in America take a greater interest in America's nursery, that is in the countryside. Over 50% of the people in rural America are unchurched. The Church must help create a national mentality of respect for the farming profession and for the small rural community. The 78,177 small towns with less than 2,500 population are America's defense against atomic destruction. The Church need not worry about its existence and progress as long as persons, families and communities prosper."

Declaring that "the full development of human personality is the end product of the Church," Monsignor Ligutti insisted that all our human endeavor should be measured by the yardstick of how much good is being done for human beings. He stressed the fact that "great scientific progress is achievable without harm to human personality, that social and material progress go together to build real progress, and that if they separate there is chaos.

"Farming must become more and more efficient but the path of efficiency is not that which dumps more and more people into the cities," he declared. "Trends are not inevitable. We must know them and we must try and shape them to the best interest of human beings."